1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34

294 tory. Palm leaf originates in Ario de Rosales,
[439] whence it is transported to the market at
Paracho. Weaving of the straw into braid is
[438] done by women of the several small villages in
the *municipio* of Paracho. The finished braid
is sold in the Paracho market, the bulk of it
going to the village of Jaracuaro on an island in
Lake Pátzcuaro. The thread used for sewing
the braid is an imported machine-made thread.

The tools of a hat maker include:

[413]

- Sewing machine
- 3 or 4 hat blocks
- Wooden paddle for blocking
- Smooth stone for blocking
- Wooden reel for thread (which is bought in skeins)
- Iron punch for ventilators
- Roller like a clothes-wringer for straightening and smoothing braid

The type of hat most commonly made has a low crown and broad brim. Each hat requires about three bundles of braid. The braid is sewn together in a spiral beginning at the middle of the crown. Each spiral of the braid overlaps its predecessor about three-quarters or five-sixths of its width. One man, working steadily, can make about three hats a day, but no one in Cherán works steadily every day.
[463] Essentially, hat making is a part-time occupation. Some hat makers are also farmers, while one is also a "tailor." Another also operates a *nixtamal* mill. One hat maker employs an assistant who is said to be paid 50 centavos a hat. This is doubtful in view of hat prices and the cost of materials.

294 Sometimes hats are whitened. They are
386 first treated with glue, then successively coated
with *oxido* (a crystalline material melted
down), a white pigment (*blanco de sin*), and
then a white varnish (*blanco de España*).
None of these materials was further identified.
The price obtained for hats varies with the
thinness of the braid, fineness of the sewing,
and the finish applied.

286 *Embroidery, crochet, and drawn work.*—A
531 number of women ornament women's blouses
[462] or make crocheted petticoat borders as a part-
time occupation. Women's blouses are some-
times equipped with crocheted yolks. Cro-
cheted bands are also placed on the short blouse
sleeves. Bands of embroidery for the bottoms

296 531 of petticoats are made by one woman, although this technique is primarily found in Nahuatzen. The proportion of women doing this work seems significantly smaller in the third *cuartel* or *barrio* when compared with the other *cuartels*.

The crochet may be replaced by embroidery or drawn work, especially on finer materials such as linen or rayon. Designs either come "from one's head" or patterns may be bought in market. Usually the poorest designs come from the market, but no evidence was found either to indicate preservation of traditional patterns on the part of those not using commercial patterns, or to indicate creativeness in designs. Blouses decorated with crochet involve 1 week's part-time work, and embroidered or drawn-work blouses, from 1 to 3 weeks.

286 *Blanket weaving.*—About four men in Cherán weave blankets. These men buy raw wool, and wash, clean, card, and spin the wool, and do the weaving. White, brown, and black colors are usually natural wool colors. For blue, the [386] only other common color, the weaver dyes white wool with indigo. A urine mordant is used. To produce a gray thread, white, black, and blue wool are mixed together before carding. Raw wool is washed and cleaned, losing about one-third its weight in the process.

293 [435] Carding is done with commercial steel cards which cost $8.00 a set and last about 3 years. A handful of wool is placed on one card and the other is drawn across it several times. The wool is then folded on one of the cards and the process repeated. If wool of two or more colors is being mixed, the rectangles of carded wool are torn into pieces, mixed together, and carded a second time in order to give a more uniform color.

Spinning is done with a wheel (fig. 6). The edges of a rectangle of carded wool are folded along the long side. The rectangle is then pulled apart down the middle except at one end, giving a strip of carded wool about 1½ inches wide. One end is thrown over the left arm and the other end fed into the yarn with the left hand while the wheel is turned with the right. When 6 to 8 inches are lightly twisted, the yarn is stretched to from 24 to 30 inches, given a tighter twist, and then wound on the spindle (fig. 6). [Text continued on page 36 b]

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323 ajara, Morelia, the *tierra caliente* of Guerrero, and
[439] Mexico City.

Another type of ceramic industry is represented by the clay toy figurines made by the women of Ocumicho in their spare time. The hollow figures are formed with molds in shapes of diminutive horses, sheep, oxen, and men, each with an opening which serves as a whistle. After firing, they are painted and varnished. Owing to complete lack of water near the town in the dry season, this activity is carried on only during the rains. Ocumicho figurines are seen in markets in many parts of western Mexico and the *tierra caliente* of Guerrero and Michoacán.

Red clay tiles, which are slowly replacing shakes in the Tarascan area, are made in some pueblos within the clay belt on the margins of the Sierra. Tanaco is the sole town within the Sierra proper to make this product. In Nahuatzen the
[177] technique of making flat concrete tiles was introduced in 1944. Such tiles are replacing the less durable clay ones in some mestizo towns.

TEXTILES

286 In 35 modern Tarascan villages spinning and weaving of cotton, wool, or agave fiber are carried on as cottage industries. Both indigenous
[177] and European techniques are employed, neither having changed since the 16th century. Since the beginning of the present century, however, factory-made textiles from large Mexican towns have begun to displace some home-woven articles, but indigenous conservatism still supports the native handicraft.

293 **Spinning.**—Formerly Tarascan weavers spun raw cotton from the *tierra caliente*, but at present commercial cotton thread, purchased in mestizo markets, is prepared for weaving by twisting five to six strands on the spinning wheel. Today only raw wool and agave fiber are homespun, the latter with the native *malacate* (uipínu), or hand spindle with round clay wheel, the former with the 16th century spinning wheel (*torno*). (See Beals, 1946, p. 36, for illustration of spinning wheel.)
● [396] Both cotton thread and spun wool are usually colored locally with aniline dyes purchased in mestizo markets.

286 **Weaving.**—Tarascans weave all agave and cotton fabrics on the native belt loom (patákua (Paracho); jopáratakua (Charapan, Tarecuato)), a horizontal loom which has a backstrap and is

322 It is first mentioned as an established industry in the report of 1789 (AGN Historia, vol. 73, f. 344), indicating that it had been introduced for some time.

LACQUER WORK

386 322 Modern lacquerwork in Michoacán is closely associated with wood carved with the adz and lathe. Before the Spanish Conquest various gourds (*Lagenaria*, *Cucurbita*, and *Crescentia*) were lacquered with a varnish made from the insect *axin* (*Coccus axin*) and *chía* (*Salvia* sp.) This industry probably centered in the Balsas and Tepalcatepec Basins (Brand, 1944, p. 60) and was extended into the towns near the southern edge of the Sierra, e. g., Peribán and Uruapan. After the introduction of Spanish adz work during the colonial period, lacquer was applied to wooden *bateas* in Peribán, Zirosto, Zacán, Uruapan, and Pátzcuaro. *Bateas* were painted, but not lacquered, in Cucupao (Quiroga) and Santa Fé de la Laguna. Today few Tarascans practice the art, the famous *bateas* of Uruapan being lacquered by mestizos. Some of the turned vases and bowls of Paracho are finished with tung oil and synthetic lacquer purchased in mestizo markets.

LEATHERCRAFT

282 Probably one of the first native Tarascan crafts stimulated and expanded by the early Spaniards was leatherwork. With the introduction of cattle, Tarascan tanners were able to multiply leather production, which formerly had been based on deerskin, to meet the heavy Spanish demand for saddles, halters, shoes (the famous "*zapatos de baqueta de mechoacán*").[183] Tanning was done with local oak bark, as it is today (AGN Tierras, vol. 83, exped. 13). During the colonial period leathercrafts were centered in the northern Tarascan towns near the pastures and hide supply, and in a few pueblos of the Sierra. The latter included Cherán, Cheranátzicurin, Ocumicho, and Nahuatzen, which was one of the largest tanning centers

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[183] Fray Toribio de Motolinía's statement of 1540 on the Tarascan leather industry is revealing: "*Han deprendido a curtir curamires . . . son buenos zapateros, que hacen zapatos y sercillas* [slippers], *borzeguíes* [high shoes], *pantaños, chapines* [wooden shoes with leather straps] *de mugeres; . . . este oficio comenzó en Michoacán, porque allí se curten los buenos cueros de venados. Hacen todo lo que es menester para una silla pintada bastos y fuste, cuxas y sobrecuxas . . .*" (Motolinía, 1903, p. 183). According to the Relación de Michoacán (p. 14) "*cotaras de cuero*," or leather sandals, were made for the cahzontzin in pre-Conquest times.